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Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Twenty-seventh Session

28 September – 2 October 2020

DRAFT REPORT

Introduction

1. The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) held its 27th Session from 28 September to 2 October 2020. Of the 129 Members of the Committee, 121 registered for the Session, including nine Ministers. Three Members of the Organization, the Holy See, Palestine, four United Nations agencies, four intergovernmental organizations, 20 non-governmental organizations and three private sector representatives participated as observers. The list of participants and the list of documents are available at <http://www.fao.org/coag/en>.
2. The Committee was informed that following the resignation of the Chair of COAG, His Excellency Ambassador Mohammad Hossein Emadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 7 September 2020, in accordance with Rule I.6 of the Rules of Procedure of COAG, the first Vice-Chair, Jennifer Fellows (Canada), representative of the North America Regional Group, exercised the functions of the Chair for the duration of the 27th Session of the Committee.
3. The Session was convened virtually, on an exceptional basis, in light of the global Covid-19 pandemic and associated public health concerns, following consultations with the COAG Bureau.

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4. The Committee agreed, on an exceptional basis, to hold the 27th Session virtually. The Committee further agreed:
- i. that the virtual meeting constituted a formal regular Session of the Committee, convened in accordance with Rule XXXII, paragraph 3, of the General Rules of the Organization and Rule II of the Committee's Rules of Procedure;
 - ii. that the normal Rules of Procedure and practices of the Committee should apply, save to the extent any rule or practice was incompatible with the virtual modality and/or could not be complied with due to the unique circumstances, in which case those rules or practices would be suspended on an exceptional basis in accordance with those rules;
 - iii. that special procedures or amended working modalities as might be required for the efficient conduct of the Session would apply.
5. Mr QU Dongyu, the FAO Director-General, addressed the Committee.
6. The Committee was informed that the European Union was participating in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution.
7. The Committee was assisted by a Drafting Committee composed of Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Cuba, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Russian Federation, Spain (Chair), United States of America and Zimbabwe.
8. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the Session.
9. The Committee approved the special procedures outlined in the Annex to the Provisional Timetable.
10. The Agenda is reproduced in **Appendix B**.

Item 2 – Sustainable Food and Agriculture

2.1 *Livestock Sector contributions to achieving the SDGs¹*

11. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the livestock sector and its role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular its linkages to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition, healthy diets, improved livelihoods and poverty eradication, animal health and welfare, the One Health approach, natural resources and climate change, as well as FAO's work in this respect, and noted the importance of strengthening cooperation and collaboration with the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock and other relevant regional and global bodies and initiatives.

12. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen its policy and technical support to Members by collecting appropriate data and knowledge and developing tools to guide countries in formulating institutional mechanisms for the preparation and implementation of livestock policy and investments, including increased resources, in relation to achieving the SDGs.

13. The Committee requested FAO to promote the exchange of information, dissemination of good practices and technical cooperation for sustainable livestock production, including by fostering integrated systems, increased productivity, adaptation, and low carbon and resilient livestock, as appropriate to different production systems and contexts and to safeguard human, animal and environmental health.

14. The Committee requested FAO to produce a comprehensive, science and evidence-based global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets, and to develop a technical document of good practices, based on sound scientific evidence, including consideration of the relevant policy recommendations adopted by CFS 43 on this subject, as the basis to consider initiating negotiations by Members on voluntary guidelines to enhance the productivity of small-scale livestock keepers.

¹ COAG/2020/5, COAG/2020/INF/5

2.2 *Preventing, anticipating and responding to high-impact animal and plant diseases and pests*²

15. The Committee recognized the critical importance of prevention and management of Animal and Plant Pest and Diseases (APPDs) for food security. It also acknowledged FAO's efforts to address these challenges at global, regional and country levels, particularly the progress made with regard to the Desert Locust Emergency response and the Global Action on Fall Armyworm (FAW), as well as the progressive elimination of high impact transboundary animal diseases.

16. The Committee endorsed the key areas and actions that FAO should focus on to reduce the burden of APPDs through the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES), in particular: i) to enhance its proactive role in fostering sustainable global and regional cooperation and in leading capacity development for the improvement of animal and plant health systems; ii) to strengthen its capacities and those of host countries to support Members and international efforts in addressing the drivers triggering the increasing threats from APPDs; and iii) support the work of the FAO-OIE Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases.

17. The Committee noted effective regionalization in accordance with International Standard Setting Bodies, notably Codex Alimentarius, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and OIE, and consistent with WTO rules, as an important tool to maintain trade, while ensuring adequate pest and disease control. It also stressed the need of addressing risks associated with diseases emerging from wildlife reservoirs, including through the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders.

18. The Committee welcomed the draft resolution (provided in annex) for consolidating the implementation of the *Peste des Petits Ruminants* Global Eradication Programme (PPR GEP) to achieve the goal of a PPR free world by 2030 and requested that it be submitted to the 165th Session of the Council and subsequently to the 42th FAO Conference in 2021 for adoption.

2.3 *Proposal for the establishment of a COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock*³

² COAG/2020/6/Rev 1

³ COAG/2020/7

19. The Committee, in accordance with Rule VII.1 of its Rules of Procedure, established a Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee) and invited the Council at its 165th Session in December 2020 and the Conference at its 42nd Session in 2021 to endorse the Sub-Committee as an intergovernmental forum with a mandate to discuss and build consensus on livestock issues and priorities, and advise COAG, and through it, the FAO Council and the FAO Conference, on technical and policy programmes and activities needed to optimize the contribution of livestock, including in poverty alleviation, food security and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods and the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

20. In accordance with Rule VII.3 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee adopted the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee, as contained in Appendix *.* to this report. The Committee stressed the importance of collaborating with specialized organizations and existing multiple stakeholder partnerships. The Committee invited the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL) to report regularly on its work to the Sub-Committee at its sessions.

21. The Committee further requested the Secretariat to develop the Sub-Committee's draft programme of work, for further consideration by the Committee.

22. The Committee recommended that the first session of the Sub-Committee on Livestock be held, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary funds, during the first quarter of 2022 and followed by the 28th Session of COAG. This funding arrangement could be revisited in subsequent COAG sessions with a view to explore other funding options.

2.4 Progress report on the implementation of FAO Action Plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) 2016-2020, and the proposal for a new FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025⁴

23. The Committee welcomed the progress report on the implementation of the FAO Action Plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and requested a regular update on progress with the Action Plan objectives to the Programme Committee and to other Technical Committees, including COAG, as

⁴ COAG/2020/8

appropriate and acknowledged FAO's work to reduce the burden of AMR in food and agriculture, which contributed to eradicating hunger, sustainable livestock production and food security.

24. The Committee welcomed the proposal of the new five-year Action Plan and appreciated the improvements made to foster sustainable actions, and called for predictable funding through maintaining core funding and increasing extra budgetary resources to support its implementation, particularly in developing countries and economies in transition with technical assistance and financial support through voluntary contributions, and inclusion of outcome indicators based on scientific evidence that are linked to FAO's Strategic Results Framework. The Committee noted the need for refinement of the Action Plan based on Members' comments and inclusive discussions.

25. The Committee underlined the importance of FAO's shared responsibility in promoting prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials in food and agriculture sectors; and appreciated FAO's cooperation with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) within the Tripartite collaboration; and encouraged a more enhanced collaboration with OIE, WHO, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Codex Alimentarius and other organizations on AMR as part of the One Health approach.

26. The Committee encouraged FAO to continue to strengthen its policy and technical support to Members through capacity building at country level and through the development and implementation of tools to assist countries to combat AMR in food and agriculture, including surveillance and monitoring. The Committee further encouraged FAO to explore alternative ingredients to replace antimicrobials as growth promoters.

27. The Committee took note of the advice that communication initiatives and awareness of the initiatives of the Action Plan are an area of ongoing focus by the FAO. The Committee further recognized the need for a greater exchange of experience and knowledge of best practices in the implementation of the Action Plan.

2.5 *Update on COVID-19 and its impact on food security and nutrition, and food systems*⁵

28. The Committee appreciated the work of FAO to provide timely data and information, policy analysis and evidence-based recommendations to address the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on food security and nutrition. The Committee welcomed the collaborative efforts to protect lives and livelihoods and to maintain the functioning of food value chains and open markets at the global, regional, national and local levels, to promote a One Health approach to enhance food safety, and to facilitate international policy dialogue and cooperation at the regional and global levels, in particular with the OIE and WHO, and other relevant organizations such as UNEP, UNDP, WTO and UN-Habitat, to provide a coordinated response to the food security, nutrition and socio-economic impact of the crisis, including in developing countries.

29. The Committee stressed the need to ensure access to food and to that end it highlighted the relevance of international trade in the context of an open, rules-based, science and evidence based, predictable, non-discriminatory, and fair multi-lateral trade system, consistent with WTO rules. The Committee further emphasized the role and relevance of national and regional trade in access to food.

30. The Committee acknowledged that there is currently no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19. Thus, the Committee encouraged FAO to work together with international and regional organizations in the efforts to improve food security, agri-food production, processing and distribution, particularly during the pandemic.

31. The Committee recognized the importance of not losing sight of the 2030 Agenda and its commitment to ending hunger and poverty, notably tackling its root causes by building sustainability and resilience in food systems and to this end requested FAO to enhance work with partners, including UN country teams and host governments, to provide its expertise, data, analysis and technical support to countries to strengthen capacities for implementation of policy advice and to guide and accelerate

⁵ COAG/2020/9

investments, with a strong monitoring and evaluation system, particularly in Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and innovation in order to help countries “build back better.”

32. The Committee expressed particular concern for the lives, livelihoods and nutritional status of those who are least able to cope with the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, and requested FAO to assess the specific impacts on women, youth, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, smallholders and family farmers and those exposed to conflict and protracted crisis and to recommend measures to ensure that no countries and no persons are left behind.

33. The Committee requested FAO to promote increased information sharing on country experiences in containing COVID-19 and its various health, economic and social impacts, noting the importance of identifying and assessing the diverse measures that have been taken and the factors influencing their success.

2.6 Operationalizing a food systems approach to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda⁶

34. The Committee recognized the significance of sustainable food systems in achieving the 2030 Agenda, and underscored the importance of coordination of all stakeholders in adopting a food systems approach and highlighted the added urgency in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

35. The Committee requested FAO to continue supporting Members in developing sustainable food systems, where requested and as specific to each context, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including through such mechanisms as the 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme and requested that the Organization continue to provide full support to the preparatory process towards the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. The Committee underlined the importance of CFS agreed products to feed into the Summit discussions and follow-up process, as well as the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, and acknowledged the on-going CFS work in this regard. The Committee encouraged FAO to assist Members, at their request, to assess the sustainability of their food systems in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

⁶ COAG/2020/10, COAG/2020/23, COAG/2020/INF/11

36. The Committee noted with satisfaction the comprehensive nature of the updated Vision and Strategy of FAO's Work in Nutrition and its articulation of the central role of healthy diets to be achieved through a food system approach that recognizes nutrition as a central component of sustainable food systems. The Committee encouraged the continued consultative effort to develop the draft Strategy and its Implementation Plan considering diverse comments and the current global challenges to address malnutrition, particularly in the most vulnerable including smallholder producers.

37. The Committee called for FAO to support Members in the development and implementation of policy on nutrition and food safety at national and regional level, as appropriate, and noted the need for the establishment of nutrition units at FAO country offices, as appropriate, and within existing resources. The Committee noted the importance of sufficient and relevant data on diets and the affordability of nutritious food which form an integral part of their work in addressing malnutrition.

38. The Committee stressed the importance of food safety for healthy diets and requested inclusion of the CODEX Alimentarius definition of food safety in the glossary of terms in the updated Vision and Strategy of FAO's Work in Nutrition.

39. The Committee stressed the key role of indigenous peoples as protectors of biodiversity and knowledge holders about natural resource management, innovations and food systems, and the need for scientists and stakeholders to follow interculturality in their understanding of indigenous food systems. The Committee welcomed the launch of the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems to provide a structured dialogue that enables an exchange of knowledge between indigenous peoples and scientists to ensure the protection and preservation of indigenous food systems in the context of United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and in other frameworks. The Committee acknowledged the gaps and challenges faced by indigenous peoples on food security, access to health and education further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee stressed the

importance of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues' recommendation of having indigenous peoples participate directly in policy dialogues.

2.7 Rationale for a new FAO Food Safety Strategy⁷

40. The Committee recognized the connection between food safety and food security and the role of food safety towards FAO's support of sustainable and inclusive agricultural and food systems.

41. The Committee emphasized the need for the new FAO Food Safety Strategy to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. The Committee requested FAO to develop a new Food Safety Strategy to serve as an international guidance, policy and advocacy instrument for decision-makers that can be used to encourage increased investments and the consistent integration of food safety into the development of sustainable food systems, food security and nutrition policies and agriculture development strategies.

42. The Committee encouraged FAO to include an approach in the new Strategy that assists countries in the implementation of the current instruments that exist to strengthen national food control systems. The Committee underlined the important role of FAO and other relevant bodies in supporting Members in promoting food control services and developing food safety systems.

43. The Committee recognized the importance of the joint work of FAO and WHO in the framework of the scientific advice programme and supported the need for ongoing sustainable funding for the food safety science advice programme and the CODEX Alimentarius Secretariat.

44. The Committee underlined the importance of World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution 73.5 and requested FAO to collaborate with WHO to ensure that their respective food safety strategies are aligned and mutually supportive, following the One Health approach and taking into consideration the public health impact and global recession of the current COVID-19 pandemic on the resilience of food safety systems.

⁷ COAG/2020/11

45. The Committee recognized that no single entity can solve the food safety challenges and encouraged FAO and WHO to use partnerships to create multi-sector and multi-disciplinary problem-solving collaboration.

46. The Committee encouraged FAO, in line with the principles of UN reform, to further inter-agency collaboration in order to support FAO members to strengthen the capacities of national food control systems at their request.

2.8 Agricultural Transformation and the Urban Food Agenda⁸

47. The Committee acknowledged that FAO's Urban Food Agenda should increase the focus on small and medium-sized cities, given their role in catalyzing the functional territorial dynamics in promoting sustainable agricultural transformation, while continuing to address challenges existing in larger cities.

48. The Committee supported the inclusion of the expanded Urban Food Agenda in FAO's corporate initiatives such as Hand-in-Hand and the Green Cities Initiative and its efforts in the lead up process towards the UN Food Systems Summit 2021. The Committee asked FAO to present the Urban Food Agenda to an upcoming meeting of Programme Committee for further elaboration of the concept and the integration of the concept into FAO's strategic work to be presented at the FAO Council.

49. The Committee requested FAO to further define the concept of small cities, consider context specificities, and to support governments in adopting the Urban Food Agenda and to strengthen support to multi-stakeholder coordination between national and local/urban authorities.

50. The Committee encouraged FAO to further increase inter-agency collaboration, including with the RBAs and other relevant UN bodies, in particular UN-Habitat and the United Nations Capital

⁸ COAG/2020/12

Development Fund (UNCDF), and partnerships with various stakeholders in supporting the Urban Food Agenda.

2.9 *Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste (FLW) Reduction*⁹

51. The Committee welcomed the proposed Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction (CoC) and noted the importance of the CoC and the role it can play in contributing to FLW reduction globally and to sustainable food systems development and achieving the SDGs, in particular SDG target 12.3. The Committee asked FAO to follow a holistic approach to include all stakeholders along the whole food chain as highlighted in the CFS HLPE report on Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems (2014) and CFS agreed policy recommendations.

52. The Committee provided a number of comments, queries and suggestions for improvement to the document, including related to short supply chains and international trade, and requested FAO to prepare a revised document in consultation with Members and under the guidance of the COAG Bureau to be submitted to the FAO Council at its next session.

53. The Committee requested FAO to continue providing demand-driven policy and technical support to countries in their FLW reduction efforts, including for the measurement of FLW, considering national and regional contexts.

54. The Committee took note of the proposed follow-up actions for FAO, once the CoC is endorsed, namely: developing codes of good practice and technical guidelines that are informed by the generic framework offered by the CoC; supporting Members in the application of the CoC and the subsidiary guidelines prepared from it; and monitoring the implementation of the CoC and reporting to COAG on progress made.

2.10 *Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP)*¹⁰

⁹ COAG/2020/13

¹⁰ COAG/2020/14

55. The Committee welcomed the Secretariat's efforts in developing the Rural Youth Action Plan, which promotes the revitalization of rural areas to ensure present and future generations can contribute to food production and ensure youth participation in sustainable development and the realization of the SDGs.

56. The Committee endorsed the Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP) on the understanding that it is a living document which can be updated to align with new FAO objectives and emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee recommended that this version of the RYAP also be reviewed by the Programme Committee at its next meeting and at any other session as is necessary.

57. The Committee recommended that the RYAP should take into consideration the diversity of youth, their needs and aspirations. The RYAP should be gender sensitive and address needs of vulnerable persons and prioritize areas such as youth empowerment, youth employment, all types of education, vocational training, development of rural youth cooperatives, capacity building, IT skills, social protection, incentive schemes and financial and risk-sharing mechanisms, the promotion of agro-business entrepreneurship and access to markets, services and rural broad-band, ensuring safeguard mechanisms related to the collection of sensitive data. The RYAP should promote strategies for enabling decent work for rural youth and it should include all approaches or systems of sustainable agriculture. The RYAP should propose alternative solutions to migration so that youth do not need to leave their places of origin.

58. The Committee acknowledged the numerous stakeholder consultations, including with the other RBAs, and recommended that collaboration with relevant organizations and initiatives, such as the CFS, the UN Decade of Family Farming, the G20 Initiative for Rural Youth Employment, be further strengthened during the implementation phase.

59. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen its organizational, budgetary and collaborative arrangements, including the establishment of a "youth desk" to ensure FAO has the capacity to implement the RYAP and integrate youth-sensitive elements in its programmes and

initiatives. This should be achieved through extra budgetary resources and other funding opportunities.

2.11 Enabling smallholders and family farmers to access and participate in appropriate innovation, information and advisory services for sustainable agrifood systems¹¹

60. The Committee underlined the importance of enabling access and enhancing participation in appropriate innovation, information and advisory services for smallholders and family farmers, especially in remote areas, in order to unleash the full potential of innovation for achieving sustainable agriculture, food systems and nutrition, and lift millions of people out of poverty and food insecurity, thereby achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the UN Decade of Family Farming.

61. The Committee recognized key challenges related to the four dimensions of food security, and also to the availability, accessibility and affordability of relevant innovation, information and advisory services; the gap between the service providers and users; the fragmented and broken linkages between agricultural research, extension and farmers; and the absence of institutional mechanisms to bring them all together. It also highlighted the critical role played by the Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) in providing support to smallholder family farmers, especially women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.

62. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen its strategic guidance and knowledge competencies as well as its technical support for Members in promoting institutional reforms, the reorientation of services, and development of the technical and functional capacities of organizations within EAS.

63. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen its technical support to generate evidence for informed policy and investment decisions, in order to increase investment in advisory services and strengthen engagement with producer organizations, cooperatives, and other public and private sector actors. The Committee also requested FAO to strengthen its capacity at Headquarters and

¹¹ COAG/2020/15, COAG/2020/INF/17

decentralized offices and develop tools, guidelines, and policy recommendations for institutional reforms, as appropriate.

64. The Committee requested FAO to develop programmes to support Members in improving demand-driven innovation, information and advisory services, by encouraging multiple actors and farmer participation, including farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, in the co-creation of knowledge and sharing of good practices through multi-stakeholder innovation platforms. The Committee noted the importance of indigenous knowledge, cultivars and local innovations. It also requested the Organization to work towards bridging the gap between information generation and use by smallholder family farmers as well as other vulnerable groups, by strengthening linkages between research, extension and farmers.

2.12 Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture¹²

65. The Committee expressed its support for the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and took note of the document COAG/2020/22 on the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

66. The Committee requested FAO to:
- i. ensure that the initiative will create synergies between International Organizations and stakeholders, and strengthen coordination between them without duplicating their activities under their respective mandates;
 - ii. include in the Terms of Reference reporting mechanisms through which voluntary guidelines from the Platform on issues related to digital food and agriculture are submitted to the FAO Members for consideration through the FAO governing body process;
 - iii. develop a solid funding plan based on voluntary contributions; and,

¹² COAG/2020/22.

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- iv. continue developing and refining the Terms of Reference for the Platform for further review by the Programme Committee and the FAO Council.

Item 3 – Climate and Natural Resources (biodiversity, land and water)

3.1 *Implementation of FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors*¹³

67. The Committee considered the document *Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors* and welcomed progress made in its implementation.

68. The Committee reviewed and provided detailed comments on and inputs to the draft 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and requested the Secretariat reflect them in the next version of the draft Action Plan for consideration of the Council.

69. The Committee acknowledged that Members will present further comments in writing to the COAG Secretariat for their subsequent submission to the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, as inputs to the process of elaboration of the Action Plan. It noted that several key actions proposed for the next biennium (2022-23) are still tentative pending the finalization of the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 and the availability of extra-budgetary funds.

70. The Committee recommended that an open, transparent and Member-led consultation process be convened to finalize the draft Action Plan and that comments and inputs from all Technical Committees, as well as the group of national focal points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) be considered in such process.

71. The Committee highlighted that the Action Plan should aim at integrating biodiversity across agricultural sectors as a strategy to achieve sustainable food systems and nutrition, and in that sense, requested that key actions and deliverables outlined a clear relation to food and agriculture. The

¹³ COAG/2020/16

Committee acknowledged the importance to promote sustainable agriculture practices that have an effective and proven positive impact on biodiversity.

72. The Committee noted the important role of the Strategy and its Action Plan in guiding and facilitating FAO's support to countries in their attempt to develop and reach agreement on a policy response to the Report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, and in their implementation of outcomes of biodiversity-related intergovernmental processes, including the global plans of action of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Committee requested FAO to continue providing policy and technical support to Members, particularly developing countries and megadiverse countries.

73. The Committee noted on-going processes in other fora, including the development of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and requested FAO to consider the outcomes of these processes in the implementation of the Strategy, and its Action Plan, with any revisions to be presented to Members for approval. It stressed the importance of ensuring full complementarity of FAO's work on biodiversity mainstreaming with processes in other fora, with a view to increase synergies and avoid duplication of work, including reporting.

74. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen the implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plan in collaboration with all relevant partners, including, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) taking the "One Health" approach that seeks to comprehensively address the disease threats at the animal-human-environment interface. It also stressed the importance of collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, and requested FAO to continue strengthening this collaboration in the implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plan.

3.2 *Towards a Global Programme on Sustainable Dryland Agriculture in collaboration with the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG)*¹⁴

75. The Committee recognized the critical importance of achieving food security and nutrition, and improved livelihoods.

76. The Committee supported the evidence-based, country-led and country-owned systems approach, encompassing international technical cooperation, in order to ensure sustainable agriculture and sustainable rural development of drylands and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

77. The Committee took note of the important work developed by WASAG towards awareness raising on the issues of water scarcity in agriculture and its importance in leveraging together with Hand in Hand Initiative the work of sustainable dryland agriculture programme.

78. The Committee acknowledged that the Global Programme will support the Members' initiatives in fostering an enabling environment through the development of appropriate technologies, breeding policies, and regional strategies, to ensure adoption and promotion of sustainable crop, livestock, soil, integrated and sustainable soil management, forest and integrated water resources management in drylands under a changing climate and suggested FAO include the middle-income countries in the Global Programme.

79. The Committee endorsed the "Global Programme on Sustainable Dryland Agriculture", and recognized its contribution to advance the 2030 Agenda, and called upon FAO to integrate it into its work and suggested it be subject to monitoring and evaluation, including under the SDG monitoring framework, in partnership with countries with technical experience of sustainable management of dryland agricultural systems and South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

¹⁴ COAG/2020/17, COAG/2020/INF/15, COAG/2020/INF/16

80. The Committee recommended FAO monitor the implementation of the Global Programme and adopt digitalization platforms and participatory approaches to support regular reporting.

81. The Committee recommended Members strengthen their cooperation for the implementation of the Global Programme and urged them to support it through targeted policies, technologies, innovations and investments.

3.3 Report of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)¹⁵

82. The Committee welcomed the progress made by the Global Soil Partnership in combating soil degradation and promoting sustainable soil management since its establishment.

83. The Committee invited Members to continue this proactive approach towards sustainable soil management and to be active partners of the Global Soil Partnership.

84. The Committee acknowledged the findings of the evaluation of the GSP and requested the Secretariat to carry out a detailed analysis of the legal and financial implications, including on the involvement of non-state actors, the decision-making process, the roles of the Regional Soil Partnerships and Focal points in case of an institutionalization of the GSP as a FAO statutory body. The Committee asked that the findings of the assessment be submitted to the 28th Session of the COAG.

85. The Committee endorsed the ‘Resolution for International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under Global Soil Network (GLOSOLAN)’, as contained in Appendix **X**. The Committee noted that the use of this resolution is not mandatory, but can be of use to countries that deem it necessary.

¹⁵ COAG/2020/18

Item 4 – Other Matters

4.1 FAO's Programme of Work in Food and Agriculture under the FAO Strategic Framework¹⁶

86. The Committee noted with appreciation the achievements made by FAO to support and advance food and agriculture during the 2018-2019 biennium, and acknowledged the developments and trends identified that are likely to influence FAO's future work with respect to the food and agriculture sector.

87. The Committee took note of the global developments and trends identified by FAO in the context of the Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise. The findings of this exercise point to already identified and newly emerging interconnected drivers and related trends, including the outbreak of epidemics and pandemics such as COVID-19. The Committee took note that the priority areas of FAO's work in food and agriculture in 2020-21 and beyond, will derive from the identified trends and challenges, while contributing to the achievement of FAO's Strategic Objectives and this is central to the Organization for delivering the SDGs.

88. The Committee welcomed and endorsed the main priorities identified for FAO's work in food and agriculture. The Committee encouraged FAO additionally to maintain a strong focus on eradication of hunger and malnutrition, food systems and nutrition while strengthening the following areas: digital agriculture, capacity development at country level for data, information and tracking of SDG indicators for better decision making, reducing food loss and waste, addressing issues related to climate change and biodiversity in relation to food and agriculture, and a strategy for innovation with inclusion of smallholder farmers.

89. The Committee called on FAO to further strengthen its important normative and standard setting role, including FAO's support to the Codex Alimentarius-related science-based programmes

¹⁶ COAG/2020/2

and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and increase focus on One Health, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), food safety and addressing transboundary pests and diseases.

90. The Committee encouraged FAO to invest and advocate for all innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems, while ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment. The Committee urged FAO to increase its technical capacity in priority areas of its highlighted work. The Committee supported FAO to play an active role towards the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and took note of the importance of the summit's upcoming outcomes to achieve SDG 2 and FAO's work. The Committee further called on FAO to review the ways the organization establishes its partnerships for closer cooperation with other agencies around its top priorities.

4.2 Implementation of the recommendations of the 26th Session of the Committee¹⁷

91. The Committee took note of document COAG/2020/3 and commended FAO on the implementation of the recommendations.

92. Recognizing the importance of regular reporting on COAG recommendations, the Committee requested FAO's continued reporting, including on the 2030 Agenda and progress on SDGs implementation, Innovation, the Rural Youth Action Plan, Family Farming, Fall Armyworm, Desert Locust, *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR), agroecology and other innovative approaches, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and Global Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).

93. Recognizing the importance of the reduction of food loss and food waste, the Committee requested regular reporting on follow up actions on the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction and appealed to its Members to support the implementation of the Code of Conduct and related initiatives, once the Code of Conduct is adopted.

94. In view of the importance of FAO's role and work in supporting sustainable food systems, the significance of which has been further highlighted during the COVID-19 crisis, and considering the

¹⁷ COAG/2020/3

upcoming UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, the Committee requested regular reporting on related initiatives and actions.

95. The Committee emphasized the importance that the criteria used for the development of indicators and instruments for evaluation, and the conclusions and linkages presented in studies and reports be based on sound scientific evidence.

96. The Committee requested FAO when proposing international years or days to include a comprehensive assessment of the presented proposal against the criteria adopted by the UN ECOSOC and the 38th FAO Conference for the proclamation of international years.

4.3 Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Committee (MYPOW)¹⁸

97. The Committee took note of the 2018-2021 Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) report and the proposed programme for 2020-2023 and welcomed the efforts of the Committee in working towards achieving the SDGs.

98. The Committee welcomed the collaboration and coordination with other technical committees and invited the Bureau to explore the possibility of increasing collaboration during the intersessional period.

99. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue analyzing global trends and emerging issues facing agriculture, including emerging threats such as Desert Locust and COVID-19.

100. The Committee requested the Secretariat to monitor the impact of COVID-19, including on nutrition and in the context of the One Health approach, and welcomed FAO's COVID-19 response and recovery programme.

101. The Committee stressed the importance of farmers, civil society and the private sector as observers in the work of the Committee.

¹⁸ COAG/2020/4

4.4 *FAO's work on Rangelands and Pastoralism, and Proposal for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists*¹⁹

102. The Committee acknowledged the important role of rangelands and pastoralism in contributing to national economies and supporting the livelihoods and food security of millions of people, as well as the ecosystem services they provide, particularly in arid and semiarid land and mountainous areas. The Committee further acknowledged the potential of rangeland and pastoralism to contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially to reducing poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2), as well as the conservation of terrestrial biodiversity (SDG 15) and the opportunities they offer for rural prosperity.

103. The Committee recognized the numerous challenges faced by pastoralists and rangelands, such as land degradation and climate change impact, and requested FAO to mainstream its work on rangelands and pastoralism to ensure their systematic consideration in its technical and policy programmes.

104. The Committee acknowledged the large support of Members, international, national and local civil society organizations, United Nations organizations and international institutions to the proposal by the Government of Mongolia to establish the observance by the United Nations system of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026.

105. The Committee endorsed the proposal and the draft Conference Resolution, as contained in Appendix XX, and recommended it be submitted for the consideration of the FAO Council at its 165th Session in December 2020 for adoption by the FAO Conference at its 42nd Session in 2021.

4.5 *Proposal for an International Day of Plant Health*²⁰

106. The Committee reviewed the proposal by the Government of Zambia to establish the observance by the United Nations system of 12 May as the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) as a key legacy of the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020.

¹⁹ COAG/2020/19

²⁰ COAG/2020/20

107. The Committee acknowledged the importance of plant health and its role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, food security, sustainable growth, environmental protection, poverty eradication, and climate action, as well as the role of FAO and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

108. The Committee highlighted that the IDPH will provide continuity to the efforts made throughout the IYPH 2020 to raise awareness among the public and policy makers of the key role of plant health in tackling hunger, poverty, threats to the environment, economic development and phytosanitary safety of international trade.

109. The Committee endorsed the draft Conference Resolution, as contained in Appendix XX, and recommended to submit the proposal for approval by the Council at its 165th Session in December 2020 and adoption by the Conference at its 42nd Session in 2021.

110. The Committee stressed that the extra-budgetary resources will be identified to cover the costs for observance of the Day and the FAO and IPPC involvement.

4.6 *Proposal for an International Year of Date Palm*²¹

111. The Committee acknowledged the crucial role of date palms in global food security, nutrition, on livelihoods of smallholder and family farmers, as well as their proven socio-economic importance, contribution to poverty eradication, human health, adaptation to climate change, the achievement of a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and FAO's work.

112. The Committee recognized that constraints to production, improved genetic resources, pests and diseases management, post-harvest handling and processing, marketing and trade, all limit the competitiveness of the date palm sector in local, regional and international markets.

113. The Committee acknowledged the key role of national governments, regional institutions and the private sector in further development of the sector and recognized the urgent need to raise

²¹ COAG/2020/21

awareness of the economic benefits of sustainably produced dates. The Committee acknowledged several national initiatives for promotion of the date palm to fragile regions considering the challenges and opportunities for sustainable production and strengthening of relevant legal frameworks.

114. The Committee recognized the observance of an International Year of Date Palm by the international community would contribute significantly to raising awareness of the suitability for sustainable cultivation of date palm under adverse climatic conditions, the nutritional and health benefits of consuming dates, while directing policy attention to improving value chain efficiencies.

115. The Committee endorsed the draft Conference Resolution, as contained in Appendix **XX**, and recommended to submit the proposal to declare 2027 the International Year of Date Palm for approval by the FAO Council at its 165th Session of in December 2020 and adoption by the Conference at its 42nd Session in 2021.

116. The Committee stressed that extra-budgetary resources will be identified to cover the costs for implementation of the Year and the FAO involvement.

4.7 Date and place of the next Session

117. The Committee informed that the 28th Session of the COAG will take place in Rome. The date would be communicated by the Director-General of FAO at a later stage.

4.8 Election of the Bureau Members of the 2th Session of the Committee

118. The Committee elected by acclamation:

- i. Mr Bommakanti Rajender, Minister Agriculture, Permanent Mission of the Republic of India, as Chairperson of the Committee;
- ii. the following six members of the incoming bureau of the Committee: Australia (Southwest Pacific); Argentina (GRULAC); Kenya (Africa); Romania (Europe), Sudan (Near East) and United States of America (North America).

4.9 Any other matters

119. None.